

### President Yuan of China Denounced by His Former Minister of Justice, Who, Commenting on the Official Telegrams, Brands Yuan as a Traitor

A remarkable story of the secret maneuvering whereby President Yuan Shih-k'ai had himself elected Emperor of China last fall—an office he has since refused—is told in a blue-covered pamphlet that has come to THE SUNDAY SUN from Shanghai.

It is entitled "The So-Called People's Will—A Comment on the Secret Telegrams of the Yuan Government." The author is Liang Chi-Chiao, who helped Yuan to found the Chinese republic and was Minister of Justice under the President, whom he now denounces as a "cowardly usurper," "a traitor to the law of the land," a man who "has used every means to destroy the morality of the entire people," and "an arch enemy of humanity according to any moral code."

President Yuan and his official family have consistently declared that the restoration of monarchical government was overwhelmingly demanded by the people. Yet, according to his former intimate, Liang Chi-Chiao, the campaign that resulted in Yuan's election as Emperor by the general convention of citizens was engineered from the start by Yuan himself, and the convention was packed by boss methods which went beyond anything that American politicians have devised.

To support his assertions, Liang offers secret telegrams which the Peking Government sent to the military and civil provincial governors, telling them that the task of the convention would be the election of President Yuan as Emperor and instructing them how to pick the delegates. Liang's exposure, published in English and Chinese, is being privately circulated in China. No word of it has been printed in this country before.

Liang Chi-Chiao is accepted as one of China's most brilliant and progressive leaders. He was a moving spirit in the attempt of the late Emperor Kuang Hsu to govern China along progressive lines. When the Emperor was imprisoned in 1898 Liang fled to Tokyo with a price on his head. There he continued the publication of the first Chinese daily newspaper, which he founded.

Upon the overthrow of the Manchus he was recalled to China to help in forming the republic. He was Minister of Justice in the Cabinet of Hsiung Hsi-lin. Retaining his Cabinet post under President Yuan Shih-k'ai, he was also Controller of the Currency and director of the Department of Currency Reform. And now he is heart and soul a believer in the rebellion of the southern provinces against Yuan, which was not quelled by Yuan's decision to renounce the Emperor's crown. Parts of his pamphlet are presented herewith.

By LIANG CHI-CHIAO, Former Minister of Justice in the Cabinet of President Yuan Shih-k'ai.

DURING the agitation for a change in the form of government the so-called discussion was but Yuan's own discussion, the so-called approval was but Yuan's own approval, the so-called petition was but Yuan's own petition, the so-called voting was but Yuan's own voting, the so-called nomination was but Yuan's own nomination. So much is obvious to both Chinese and foreign observers. Nevertheless Yuan flatters himself that the world can be easily imposed upon and has artfully disowned everything even to this day.

Happily the secret telegrams from the Peking Government to the military and civil governors of the provinces have been divulged. They bear the dates of sending and the names and seals of the senders. Photographic copies of the same have been circulated by the Yunnan military government. Such being the case, it is impossible for Yuan and his cabal to suppress them, even if they had 10,000 hands, not to plead "not guilty" even if they had 10,000 mouths. I beseech my fellow countrymen, young and old, and every member of the human race to open their eyes and see and close their eyes and think what wrongs have been done, what crimes have been perpetrated and why the culprit continues to go about arrogantly in broad daylight without let or hindrance.

In support of my assertion I will point out the important points in the secret telegrams. On September 26, 1915, Sun Yu-chun, a member of Yuan's Administrative Council, wired: "A new method for obtaining the people's will has to be devised. The military and civil governors and the military commandants of the provinces are requested to call an extraordinary meeting of the General Convention of the Citizens, in which each district is to be represented by one person to be selected from among the gentry or common people of the district who are residing in the provincial capital."

On September 27 the Society for the Preservation of Peace and the Provincial Delegation at Peking wired: "In order to clothe the proceedings with an appearance of regularity the representatives of the districts, though they are really appointed by the highest military and civil officials of the province, should still be nominally elected by the districts . . ."

A telegram from Tuan Chi-kwei, Military Governor of Mukden, dated August 30, reads: "The first step to be taken has now to be decided. We propose that petitions be sent in the name of the citizens of the respective provinces to the Administrative Council, acting in the capacity of Legislative Council. . . . The drafts of the petitions will be made in Peking and wired to the respective provinces in due course. You will insert your own name as well as those of the gentry and merchants of the province."

Now, who made use of the names of the citizens? The Government, of course, and that irrespective of any real consent on the part of those interested. Moreover, the citizens petitioning for a change in the form of government were one and all appointed by the military and civil governors and the military commandants of the provinces from among the officials in the provincial capitals. Are they, then, citizens or partisans? I leave my readers to answer.

how the members of the general convention of the citizens' representatives came to be "elected." "Thoroughly understand our implied meaning and utilize the proceedings to suit our purpose!" Select those who are "obsequious!" "Judiciously assign their names to the several voters, and request them to vote as directed!" "Measures which are in effect coercive, though not so in appearance." What do these phrases mean? And how many evils were implied in them? Were the electors in any wise free to elect whom they liked? Had the representatives any freedom of opinion? Has such an election ever been heard of in any country at any age?

On October 11 Chu Chi-chun, Minister of the Interior, and nine others wired: "When the electors of the districts have reported themselves at the provincial capital a reception committee will be appointed or special deputies sent to meet them and to exchange views with them. The superintendent of election should then, under cover of inviting them to a social gathering or dinner party, request their presence at his official residence, and improve the occasion by explaining to them the fundamental principles of monarchical government, as well as the general situation in China, and by making known to them the names of those who are to be elected. No stone should be left unturned in attaining the object of the election."

A telegram from Chu Chi-chun and nine others, dated October 26, reads: "After the form of the state has been put to a vote the nomination of Yuan Shih-k'ai as Emperor should be made forthwith without further voting. You should address the representatives and tell them that they should nominate Yuan Shih-k'ai as the great Emperor of the Chinese Empire and that if they are in favor of the proposal they should signify their assent by standing up. . . . As for the exact words to be inserted in the letter of nomination they have been communicated to you in our telegram on the 23d inst. These characters, forty-five in all, must on no account be altered."

Alas! Having copied the telegrams thus far I fail to find words to express what is in my mind. If you will read the text intelligently you will understand why out of a total number of 1,700 and odd votes there was not one dissenting vote, why all the provinces sent the letters of nomination on one and the same day, why all the provinces invested the Administrative Council with general powers to act on behalf of the citizens' representatives. And lastly, you will understand why in the letters of nomination from the provinces the very same forty-five characters were used: "Respectfully nominate the present President Yuan Shih-k'ai as Emperor of the Chinese Empire. He is appointed by Heaven to ascend the Throne and to transmit it to his heirs for 10,000 generations." &c. Is this the will of the people, the will of the officials or the will of the would-be Emperor? I leave my readers to answer.

On October 29 the National Convention Bureau wired: "If, after receiving our last telegram, you have found any difficulty in carrying out these instructions they should not hesitate to use measures which in effect are coercive, though not so in appearance."

From this telegram we may know

as to enable you to have a free hand in the matter."

"To have a free hand!" In doing what? "We shall do our utmost to help you!" With what funds? I need say nothing about asking the foreign financiers who have made loans to us and those of our compatriots who have subscribed to the third and fourth year domestic loans, the savings lottery and the national salvation fund the following question: "Did you ever expect at the time of subscribing that your moneys would be devoted to such uses?"

On October 11 the National Convention Bureau telegraphed as follows: "The future peace and safety of the nation depends upon the documents exchanged between the Government organs at Peking and those in the provinces. Should any of these come to the notice of the public the blame for failure to keep official secrets will be laid upon us. Moreover, as these documents concern the very foundation of the State, they will in case they become known leave a dark spot on the political history of our country. Upon their secrecy depends our national honor and prestige in the eyes of both



Yuan Shih-k'ai, President of China.

our own people and foreigners. We hope you will appoint one of your confidential subordinates to be specially responsible for the safe custody of the secret documents."

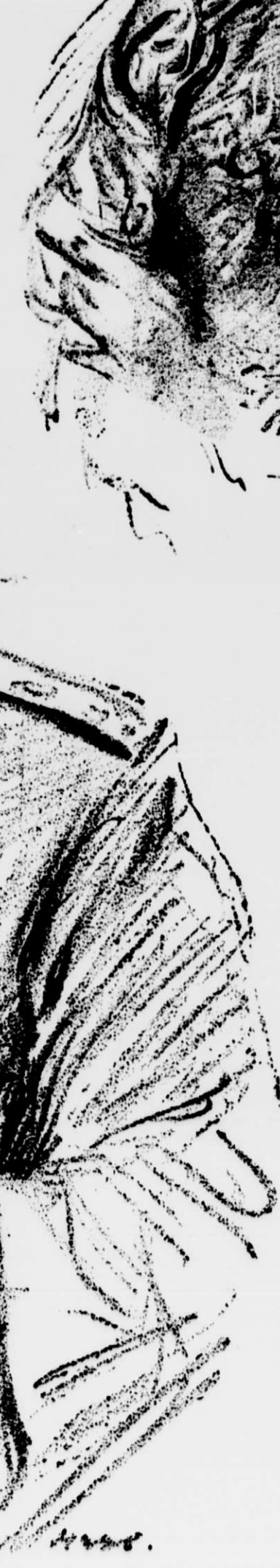
Again the National Convention Bureau wired under date of December 21: "No matter how carefully their (meaning the documents) secrets may have been guarded, still they remain as permanent records which might compromise us, and in the event of their becoming known to foreigners, we shall not escape severe criticism and bitter attacks, and what is worse, should they be handed down as part of the national records, still they stain the opening pages of the history of the new dynasty. The central Government after carefully considering the matter has concluded that it would be better to sort out and burn the documents. You will, we earnestly hope, lose no time in cautiously and secretly carrying out our request."

How my readers feel after reading these two telegrams I know not. For my own part what surprises me most is that Yuan and his partisans con-

fessed that the secret documents would "leave a dark spot on the political history of our country," would "stain the opening pages of the history of the new dynasty," would compromise the dignity of the State and would not escape criticism on the part of foreigners.

Concerning the change in the form of government the National Convention Bureau wired under date of October 15: "All formalities in connection with voting should whenever possible be carefully observed, so as to clothe the proceedings with an appearance of regularity and to furnish an excuse for suppressing internal discontent on the one hand and for stopping foreign interference on the other."

A telegram from Chu Chi-chun and nine others, dated November 7, reads: "A certain foreign Power, under the pretext that the Chinese people are not of one mind and that troubles are to be apprehended, has lately forced England and Russia to take part in tendering advice to China. Action should under no circumstances be deferred. When all the votes of the provinces unanimously recommending the enthronement shall have reached Peking the Government will of



Liang Chi-Chiao.

I conjecture that when at his wife's end he will diplomatically and shamelessly disown everything by saying that all the telegrams were sent by unscrupulous men on their own responsibility without the least knowledge on his part. If such were the case Yuan must have been indeed a puppet made of clay and wood, devoid of consciousness! Even if we grant the absurd argument that Yuan was entirely ignorant of what was going on still what about the numerous public acts in furtherance of the monarchical scheme? Can Yuan deny all knowl-

edge of them and shift the responsibility to others?

Take the case of the "Society for the Preservation of Peace." It is clearly an illegal body. No amount of argument can shield its members from the extreme penalties imposed by the law and the constitution of the land. Yet they were permitted to openly defy the law, and this even in the heart of the national capital. That Yuan should have been ignorant of the affair is out of the question. Why, then, did he not order the dissolution of the society and the arrest of its members?

Take another instance. Before the eleventh day of November last, when the votes for or against the change in the form of government were opened by the Administrative Council, the Government could not have known the result of the voting. Yet the so-called Bureau for the Preparation of Enthronement Ceremonies had already been created in the latter part of September last. Its office was established in the President's executive mansion and its chief, as well as its minor officials, was appointed by Yuan himself.

As for Tuan Chi-kwei, Chu Chi-chun, Chou Tse-chi, Liang Shih-yi, Yang Tu, Sun Yu-chun and the rest, they are indeed men of the lowest and meanest character. Their only ambition is position and money. Still, they are not audacious enough to commit such hideous crimes in an underhand way against the public sentiment of the world. They are like a tame dog who, without the command of the master, would not dare to bite.

For these reasons I say that Yuan, and Yuan alone, is responsible to the fullest extent for the vile intrigues against the republic. And the principal having been ascertained, I submit to my fellow countrymen, young and old, as well as to our intelligent and upright foreign friends, my opinion as to the charges that should be formulated against him.

From a legal point of view Yuan's guilt can be easily determined. But all this is idle talk. The law of the land, the weapon with which the State protects itself against crimes, has long since become a dead letter in the hands of none other than the culprit himself, so that the last and the only remedy—force—has to be resorted to in order that the law may be revived and become once more effective.

Who are revolutionaries? Who are rebels? Are those to be considered revolutionaries who are trying to preserve and protect the existing Government, or those who are scheming to overthrow it and set up a diametrically opposite authority in its place? Are those to be considered rebels who are trying to obey the existing laws and Constitution of the land, or those who are trying to get them aside? These questions are so simple that they can be answered offhand by anybody.

If we read the secret telegrams carefully in the light of the events of the last few months we cannot doubt but that it is Yuan and his conspirators who are the revolutionaries and rebels, such being the case, it is the duty of every public servant to put forth his utmost strength to quell the rebellion and to bring home the crime to those involved in it.

Throughout his career Yuan never said what he meant, and never meant what he said, so that his words have always been inconsistent with his deeds. His fondness for perfidy and skill in carrying it out makes him the greatest hypocrite the world has ever seen.

Twice on assuming office he solemnly swore the oath of loyalty. Twice he swore it treating it as if it were not a sacred thing. He has dared to declare